

**Foreign Red Soil:
The Function of the Correspondent in Communist China**

April 2007

Corresponding Project: <http://myweb.guelphhumber.ca/~kfu01/index.html>

Kimberly Fu

Undergraduate, Media Studies

University of Guelph-Humber

Submitted to: Professor George Bragues

Introduction

In 1982, when the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was finalized by the Government of Canada, every Canadian citizen was given fundamental rights: freedom of conscience and religion: freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of thought, belief, and opinion, which also included freedom of the press (Canadian, par. 2). This particular freedom was recognized by the Canadian media to provide a forum for debate in the public sphere, and thus, develop a certain democratic relationship between the press and public – a luxury that only free countries like Canada are able to experience. A couple years earlier, halfway across the world, Communist China underwent a Cultural Revolution in revolt against their leader, Mao Zedong, his wife Jiang Qing and the army that Zedong developed to purge Chinese society of bourgeois influence. As stated by BBC’s special report on this revolution, the revolt was successful in 1977, resulting in the arrest of the Gang of Four, China’s most dominant power aside from Mao, and beginning an era where globalization has caused western societies to influence China greatly. (“China’s Communist”) With the suppression of the arts, Zedong also strengthened the press regulations that were issued long before his reign, stating that the press was to be used as a government tool, utilizing it to execute the Chinese Communist Party’s mandates and beliefs.

Controlled media – as instituted by Zedong during his time in office through development of government-owned propaganda news agencies – is still present today. These new agencies have sparked critical studies on its global effects. On the news front, one may wonder how it is possible for China to continue executing communist control over its media outlets, while foreign media in China continues to function as a gateway to information for its readership overseas. The first signs of foreign media were present as early as 1841, when Britain

took over Hong Kong and extraterritorial rights were developed for British media in five Chinese ports: Shanghai, Canton, Amoy, Foochow and Ningpo. By 1842, English language newspapers were already available to foreigners and local media, and the struggle of foreign press adapting to local regulations. (Desmond 282-284)

But the divide between Western and Eastern policies traces back to long before Zedong came into power. Press suppression was evident even during the Opium Wars between Britain and China in 1899. When an anti-foreign sentiment developed in China through the I Ho Ch'uan League (translated to "Fists of Righteous Harmony" or, as it was nicknamed, "Boxer"), an uprising occurred amongst foreigners and Chinese Christians, for which the sentiment was targeted towards. The Boxer Rebellion became one of the largest uprisings in Chinese history, with over 200 foreigners and tens of thousands Christians killed, and eight democratic nations – including the United States and France – sent troops to settle the riots. Foreign press arrived from the Philippines to cover this event, despite many restrictions that prevented them from filing their stories (i.e. lack of technology and having to file stories by way of the Great Northern Telegraph line across Siberia) (Desmond 416-419). Thereafter and later strengthened by Zedong, government policies did not allow the media to publish anything negative about the Chinese government and to this day, there have been accounts of foreign press being detained for not abiding by these regulations. According to Reporters without Borders (or Reporters sans Frontières), at least 32 reporters, local and foreign alike, have been detained throughout the country as of January 1, 2006. (China)

And now with technological developments to consider (as China now has the most heavily regulated Internet policies in the world), more obstacles have been created in the

development of foreign news; thus beginning our study on how modern foreign journalism is a function within a modern post-revolution communist country.

History of Press Regulation in China

There is no question that the press in China is used as a platform for political opinion, controlled heavily by the government with severe consequences to those who revolt against its methods. In a study done by Douglas Van Belle in 2000, press freedom was categorized according to one essential element: power and control from the government. Essentially, the least involvement from the government constituted the press as “free”, while more rigorous attempts of controlling the media increased its level of press regulation. Van Belle outlined the levels in his book, Press Freedom and Global Politics, from nonexistent or limited press (0), to a controlled, heavily-censored press (4) (Van Belle 48).

By following Van Belle’s classification, this means that China is of Level 4, or one of the most controlled states in terms of press freedom. Nations like Canada and the United States are considered to be “free” from government influence. Free press and leadership were considered to be interlinked during Van Belle’s study, displaying the difference of power in “free” states as opposed to “restricted” states like China. “In free press countries, leadership control of the news media content is indirect, accomplished by dominating the sources through the provision of information that captures news media coverage.” (82)

But in order to fully understand the differences between North American (“free”) and Chinese (“restricted”) journalism policies, we must first look at the Chinese’s long and complex history concerning press freedoms. The press began to fully transform into a government power (as opposed to a democratic gateway of information for its people), when Yuan Shik-kai

announced himself as emperor in 1895. At this time, the press revolted, thus forcing Shik-kai to develop the Press Law of 1914. Five hundred newspapers were shut down, except for the few that were willing to abide by Shik-kai's rules, support his reign, and as a result, publish his thoughts. By the time Mao Zedong came into power, the press was fully suppressed and owned by the government. Zedong followed strict Marxist-Leninist reform, and was determined to regulate the country under what was called, "Mao Zedong Thought", a meld of former rigorous Marxist-Leninism and his own ideas of oppression. As written by Edward Steinfeld for Harvard Magazine, the Great Helmsman (as he was nicknamed) caused several millions of people to reform, psychologically and physically, according to Mao Zedong Thought, as part of the great Communist movement. His influence affected many aspects of authority in local communities: schools in which authoritative teachers were employed, households where parents were taught to discipline their children in accordance to Mao Zedong Thought and so forth. (Steinfeld, par. 1)

With this came the renunciation of all the arts, and with that began the restrictions of press freedoms as well. In Zedong's infamous speech during the 1942 Forum of Literature and the Arts in Yenan, he hints at the role of the press as a tool for the government, as "press" was considered to be part of "art":

In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands about classes or art that is detached from our independent of politics. Proletarian literature and art are part of the whole proletarian revolutionary machine. Therefore, Party work in literature or art occupies a definite and assigned position in Party revolutionary work as a whole and is subordinated to the revolutionary tasks set by the Party in a given revolutionary period. (Kuo-Sin 19)

Other parts of China, like Taiwan and Hong Kong, began adopting their own methods of press control, but were more geared towards the western style of news production. The Taiwanese government, for example, drafted the “Articles of Faith”, much like the code of ethics drafted for the Canadian journalists. One may wonder how it was possible for Taiwan or Hong Kong to divert from the path that Mainland China was venturing upon, but the answer was quite simple: democracy. Democracy is evident in both Taiwan and Hong Kong, as they function much like North American systems. In particular, after Hong Kong returned back to Chinese rule from being a British colony, the relationship between China and Hong Kong returned to its original “one country, two systems” method. (“Press in”, par. 4) Taiwan, on the other hand, was under Martial Law for 38 years, before it was lifted and freedom of speech and political expression was repealed. The formation of the Democratic Political Party (DPP) on the island turned around the entire press regulation system. (“Democracy”, par. 2) To this day, Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian defends this freedom, as he states that press freedom contributes to his plans for full constitutional reform. (Tai-lin, par. 6)

Major Media Players: Then and Now

During the time of Mao Zedong’s reign Xinhua (or New China) News Agency, one of the largest agencies in the country and the only one at the time in Beijing, began to open its doors. Xinhua not only was the headquarters in news production, but it was also China’s well-oiled propaganda machine, extremely well monitored and meticulous of the pieces that its journalists produced. Mao Zedong had issued very simple, but very severe rules for Xinhua to abide by. His classification of the “Three Worlds” explained how he viewed the world according to power. The First World consisted of the then-USSR and the United States of America. The Second

World was classified as Europe and Japan, generally neutral nations with the potential of fighting against First World powers, but relatively peace-promoting. Zedong classified the Third World as the developing world, consisting of countries that would fight against the First World without question. (Richstag 301) Xinhua was therefore a platform for a developing country like China to execute the latter, by printing stories that geared towards the demise of bourgeois states, and celebrated the development of Third World countries. A weeklong study done by Richstag showed that all foreign articles focused on the United States, Europe and the USSR, expressing how these countries were dwindling economically, socially and otherwise, while all articles focused on the prosperity and development of China. (309) Xinhua has been the focus of many studies regarding news production, often confusing foreigners who do not understand the extent of the Chinese government's influence on the press. To put things in perspective, Jorg-Meinhard Rudolph conducted a study in 1984 on the Reference News, a Xinhua-produced internal publication. This publication was only available to members of the Chinese Communist Party, intellectuals, and academics. It was also the most widely read newspaper in the country, reaching a readership of three million people annually. What is important to note is that the publication is also heavy in foreign news; and yet government power is still sustained through its journalists, by regulating their methods in acquiring the foreign news, and how they must translate it for the Chinese readership:

The clue to the question is that foreigners do have access to the original sources of the reprints and are thus able to compare the translated versions with the originals. The Chinese Reference News subscribers, the people for whom this newspaper is being published, however, will hardly ever have the opportunity to compare the Chinese reprints with the Japanese, English, French, German, Spanish, Hindi, etc. originals. (12)

After Xinhua's development into a well-oiled state machine, several other news sources began surfacing and becoming available to the public, both foreign and local. China Daily, now the leading English newspaper in the country, was established in 1981, with a daily circulation of over 200,000 ("About", par. 1). This newspaper became an integral connection between the Chinese Communist Party counterpart, People's Daily, which is more geared towards state and political news. In fact, China Daily and People's Daily constantly borrow news from each other, blurring the lines between what is state-owned and what is independently produced by local news media. People's Daily established in 1948, long before China Daily, with a daily circulation of over 3 million, a far greater readership and undoubted greater impact on the Chinese population. Moreover, People's Daily has a Chinese version, which is more accessible for Chinese locals who cannot read English. China Daily, conveniently, has no such version. Amongst these major media players – which made a greater impact on the Chinese long before foreign media began to significantly take place – there is also China.org, an online news source similar to China Daily, and CCTV (China Central Television), China's largest broadcast television news network, functioning similarly to CNN, though also state-owned.

Coverage Major Media Events: China vs. North America

By looking at the consequences of Chinese censorship and press suppression, we can begin to understand the vast difference between government-regulated journalism and democratic journalism by foreign counterparts.

Many major media events as the Cultural Revolution began to unfold in the mid-to-late 1900s. A sense of uprising was brewing behind closed doors, as government regimes rose higher into power and policies became more rigorous. The peak of this uprising was marked by the

Tiananmen Massacre of 1989, when several hundred civilians – most of which were students – were killed after refusing to step down from protest unless the government abided by their demands for democratic reform. The New York Times reported over 300 deaths the day after the massacre, predicting the toll rising rapidly as time went on (Kristof A1). With the chaos that ensued during that time, many correspondents were faced with danger, since those who supported cultural reform were severely punished and most foreign correspondents hailed from democratic nations.

Jan Wong, a former Beijing correspondent for Toronto's Globe and Mail, based her novel, Red China Blues: My Long March from Mao to Now, on her experiences as a correspondent, and more specifically, as a Chinese-Canadian self-proclaimed former Maoist. The pinnacle of her time in China was reflected in the hardships she faced during the massacre. Her accounts took a hard look at the life of the foreign correspondent in Communist China:

Some foreign correspondents, especially those with children, had already left for Hong Kong or Tokyo... Troops had beaten up several television crews and smashed their equipment on the night of the massacre. At one point, they blindfolded a Reuters correspondent and threatened to kill him... 'What should I do?' I asked Norman, all but wringing my hands. 'Well, if I were a housewife, I'd go to Hong Kong,' he said dryly. 'But if I were a journalist, you couldn't pry me out of here.' He was right. I calmed down and never thought about leaving again. (268)

Even when Wong's book published close to 10 years later, when the country already began culturally reforming itself to a more democratic state, the book was banned from entering the country. This was a result of the never-changing publishing and information disclosure policies that the Communist country kept on foreign media. Two years later, Wong returned to China,

this time as a foreign citizen, and wrote about her experiences in her follow-up book, Jan Wong's China, which coincided with the country's fiftieth birthday. That book was subsequently banned as well (Jan, par. 4).

But as we are now in a new millennium, without the presence of Mao Zedong, foreign journalists now also have to struggle with a paradox in press regulations. When Zedong passed in 1976, many Marxist-Leninist laws were slowly diminished and replaced with more democratic policies. Deng Xiaoping, Zedong's predecessor still believed that press and publishing was to execute and support the CCP's work in reforming the country (Ran, par. 3). But at the same time, other previously banned acts were becoming more tolerated, causing confusion between what was permitted and not permitted amongst journalists. For example, close to 10 years after the incidents at Tiananmen Square, another major media incident took place. Deng Xiaoping permitted choice of religion, which suddenly opened possibilities for Muslims, Catholics, Jews, and so forth, instead of restricting the Chinese to the Marxist-Leninist ideology that Zedong created (Chen 16-17). Li Hongzhi, a former trumpet player and a generally regular citizen, began a meditation movement called Falun Gong, a combination of traditional Chinese thought, Buddhist and Taoist practices and physical breathing exercises. (17) This movement hit the country by storm, and its followers grew into the millions, many of whom were Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members. Soon the government began feeling threatened by the strength in numbers of the entire movement, especially after realizing that it had penetrated into the upper ranks of authority. ("Chinese Media", par. 4) The government subsequently banned the practice of Falun Gong, and arrested Li Hongzhi and three other Falun Gong leaders. The media that followed this event were also rising, and severe propaganda was evident. The government began using the Chinese news media as a tool to suppress the movement,

condemning its influence over the Chinese population, and reporting suicides and cultish behaviour as a result. Meanwhile, international media were condemning the government itself for its methods of handling the situation. On April 30, 1999, the National Post of Toronto reported some 15,000 Falun Gong followers protested in China's capital. Though the Post, like many other publications, described Falun Gong as a "meditation cult", the article managed to report from several different angles of debate – what democratic journalism is supposed to achieve, according to the Canadian Association of Journalists' mandate on diversity ("Canadian Association", par. 4). Not only did it claim that Falun Gong as a cult with its followers staggering in numbers, but it also casted government officials in a harsh light, stating that officials are meeting in private to discuss different propagandist methods to stifle the movement from increasing in size. (Goodspeed A13) At the same time, any news publication in China that dared to publish a positive or even neutral outlook on Falun Gong was immediately banned from ever practicing journalism again. Xinhua News Agency published an average of 15-20 articles a day about the negative repercussions of Falun Gong, shortly after it was labelled as a cult. Moreover, in contact with international press, Xinhua evaded topics relating to human rights and compared the Chinese news media on par with media of democratic nations. They claimed that "China is doing the same thing as the US government did to the Davidian group, Japan did to Aum Shinriko, and European countries did to the Solar Temple." (Chen 29) This caused Falun Gong followers to create underground movements, subsequently using international publications as its own mouthpiece and taking the movement to a global scale. In Vancouver, an anti-communist Chinese newspaper, World Journal, ran a Saturday special section on Falun Gong and its practices. (Zhao 216) Also, a New York-based Falun Gong Information Center was established in 1999 with an international press office and a staff of individuals that acted as the

movement's spokespersons. (217) Danny Schechter, a human rights activist and graduate of Columbia University's School of Journalism, relays his accounts on Falun Gong at the time it was occurring in his book, Falun Gong's Challenge to China: Spiritual Practice of 'Evil Cult'?:

At first, the national leadership did nothing and said even less, but in some regions, local leaders began to harass practitioners, who reported having their phones tapped and being followed. 'Inscrutable,' I joked to myself about the national leadership's initial silence, but hey, the Chinese government often functions in mysterious ways. (II)

Through this account, it is evident that North America news media merely treats Falun Gong as another religious movement, much like Scientology or the Jewish sect of Kabala and managed to keep a neutral view of its effect on modern society.

Another major media event that changed the world's views of Chinese press was the attempted cover-up of the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak, reported to originate in the Guangdong province. The local press was prevented from reporting accounts of the epidemic in 2003, mainly due to the government influence on the press and its attempt to maintain a positive image on the country. However, when the disease began traveling overseas, appearing first in Toronto and later spreading to other regions, it was then traced back to China, thus spawning a great deal of criticism on the country's silence. Ernest Zhang and Kenneth Fleming analyzed the execution of these reports when China was found to be at the origin of the disease in a study printed in the Asian Journal of Communication. It was not until the World Health Organization (WHO) visited Beijing in June of 2003 when they confirmed that the disease originated in the country, even though the first case of SARS occurred a year before, in November of 2002. The Chinese government had kept silent about the disease for a whole year, claiming in initial reports that the deaths were due to the bird flu instead. While Zhang and

Fleming are still unsure of why the government remained silent for such a lengthy period of time, they agree that censorship restrictions definitely played a role: “In deciding what and how to cover an important health issue, the influence of news medium under censorship is usually limited and, to a large extent, can be manipulated by the government. It is thus hoped that research, using quantitative analysis, will add to our understanding of the institutional relationship between a censored news medium and its government.” (321)

Reports of local newspaper publications shut-downs spread across the country, including independent publications like the Nan Fang Metropolitan News, whose editor was fired and doors were closed following an article that contradicted government reports stating that the disease was under control (Zietlin, par. 16).

Meanwhile, overseas, Canada was becoming one of the biggest victims of the SARS outbreak, averaging a total of nine deaths by April 7, 2003 (“China’s SARS”, par. 4). Local Canadian media, along with correspondents reporting back from Chinese locations, were managing to get real facts on the death statistics. Daniel Drache and Seth Feldman of York University in Toronto managed to conduct an extensive study on Canadian news coverage on the SARS epidemic, analysing more than 2300 newspaper articles that was produced during that time. It stated that even during the WHO advisory and investigation, Canadian media still managed to devote 37% of its health news to the SARS case, a significant increase from any amount that was produced by Chinese news media when SARS broke out one year before (Drache 3).

Although some Chinese news media claim that Western journalists framed the SARS outbreak to be a bigger debacle than it really was, foreign correspondents stationed in China were experiencing the outbreak first hand, and provided a more realistic account of what was

really occurring. John Pomfret, a Washington Post correspondent stationed in Beijing (one of the major cities affected by SARS) reported a couple months after the disease's origin was confirmed: "As Hanoi, Singapore, Hong Kong and Toronto battled outbreaks, and infected people started showing up in other parts of Asia and across Europe and North America, it became clear that the biggest failing in the response to SARS was China's secrecy about the outbreak. The cover-up robbed the world of at least three months during which public health measures could have snuffed out the disease in the southern province where it emerged in November." (Zietlin, par. 5-6)

Guo Ke, deputy dean of Journalism and Communications at Shanghai International Studies University hopes that the SARS case, amongst many others, would serve as a wake-up call for Chinese news media: "...media ought to grow more independent and be ready to criticize government officials, when it's necessary. Given the Chinese media's experience with the SARS crisis, it is reasonable to expect that more aggressive investigative reporting for public emergencies will exist in the future." (Yu, par. 16) However, the question still remains as to whether foreign news media and Chinese media will be able to act symbiotically to achieve these goals, or whether heightened press suppression would create a greater divide between the two.

The Function of the Modern Correspondent

Naturally, the main challenge in regards to a foreign correspondent stationed in China is to be able to produce unbiased news, without disrupting China's own news policies and/or getting detained by Chinese authorities. This provides a huge risk for correspondents, as they must assess their news coverage on a daily basis, primarily focusing on the sources available to them. The correspondent is also faced with the sensationalism factor: what are the repercussions

of reporting a sensational piece of news if it casts the country in a bad light? According to Reporters without Borders, there have been countless cases of journalists being arrested for reporting “inappropriate” content or state secrets. Most recently, a contributor to the New York Times has been scheduled to trial for disclosing such secrets (“China: Annual”, par. 3). In other reports, at least 16 foreign journalists have been arrested while merely investigating sensitive issues. (Par. 5) The risks are undeniably evident, and yet, how do correspondents cope? Reporters without Borders has reported countless occasions of reporters being detained, which is not unlike the reported detainments currently occurring in the Iraq War. However, over time the restrictions against foreign media have become slightly more lax in terms of allowing information to be sent overseas. Goran Leijonhufvud, one of the first correspondents in Beijing, lived in foreign quarters where only special access was granted, and was restricted to the number of local dailies he used to acquire his news. He and his foreign colleagues would rely on each other as sources, while still managing to maintain a steady flow of quality information for his publication, *Dagens Nyheter*. At this time, the government stressed their ability to take action if needed: “The Chinese government still had a number of restrictions on correspondent movements in force on paper, although they did not seem to be applied – except perhaps when an excuse was needed for expelling someone.” (Hannerz 171)

The dissemination of news in China has come a long way since the Cultural Revolution, as stated by ABC, one of Australia’s leading news agencies. ABC began reporting news from China some 30 years ago and has since created a news bureau in Hong Kong. Currently they have employed over 25 correspondents and camerapersons to cover Chinese news. However, before opening their first news bureau, video reels had to be sealed in wooden boxes before

being sent by China Post back to Australia (“China: the”, par. 3). This type of secrecy was not uncommon, as the government had strict policies against the dissemination of news.

Now, it is possible to function far more normally as a correspondent than of foreigner constantly monitored by the government. Of course, there are many occasions in which foreign correspondents find themselves in a more difficult position than correspondents of other locations. According to Rowan Callick of the Australian, China “lacks the ‘set pieces’ that form the focus of much media coverage elsewhere: company annual meetings, parliament sittings, court hearings, press conferences. So we tend to operate, as foreign correspondents, within our own separate orbits, taking soundings, trying to get a sense of what’s going on...” (Callick, par. 15)

While this is not exactly unheard of in today’s realm of foreign correspondence, the correspondent does have a little bit more freedom to report in the democratic methods that they have been trained in, within certain conditions. In July of 2005, there were altogether 245 foreign news agencies in China, with 425 correspondents from 44 countries operating out of the country (“Forward”, par. 1). Currently, foreign correspondents are still under a watchful eye by the government, as they must apply for a press card to receive accreditation in China. In order to receive a press card, correspondents must fill out an application stating the specific news network in which they are reporting for, along with the corresponding details of their work in China (“Press”, par. 3). Correspondents are not permitted to be based in any other location besides the major cities in China: Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. (Par. 1) All foreign correspondents must also report within the scope of the stated purpose that they submitted in their application (“Reporting”, par. 3). Moreover, the government has several ways of punishing reporters for misconduct, as proven by several accounts of arrests and

detainment by both local and foreign media. According to the Council of Foreign Relations, the most common method of exerting restriction on foreign reporters is to simply dismiss or demote the correspondent's position. Other methods include libel, fines, shutting down news outlets and, as the most severe, imprisonment. (Zissis, par. 6-11)

In Beijing, there is currently "foreign diplomat apartments", which is essentially an enclosed, gated security operated complex in which most foreign correspondents in the city have offices. There are only three registered news agencies from Canada at this present time: The Globe and Mail, CBC and CTV. From the United States there are a reported 33 agencies. Most of these organizations are listed as being stationed within these foreign diplomat apartments ("USA", "Canada"). As well, due to constant cases of local media cooperating with foreign media in disclosing top-secret news, the foreign diplomat apartments are therefore strictly reserved for foreigners only.

Foreign correspondents day-to-day activities can vary with each bureau. However, according to current correspondents from accredited organizations such as the Associated Press and the South China Morning Post (based in Hong Kong), reporters usually begin their day by researching current local news. From these sources, the reporters then attempt to speak to as many local citizens, and even local reporters, in order to generate a scope of the events. This way, foreign correspondents are able to create their own conclusions of current events in China, rather than solely depending on government-controlled news reports.

After the story has been completed, there is also the issue of filing these reports back to their home countries where it would be published for an international readership. The Associated Press requires an external route, by way of Hong Kong, in order to file its reports back to the United States, as a direct method is monitored by the government. Some can say that this is

merely advancement to the method used decades ago: when correspondents filed their stories from China and Vietnam via Morse code. (Knight 9) However, there is no definitive method for correspondents to function properly as truthful reporters; while some reporters claim that they file their stories via e-mail and the Internet (Faison, par. 14), others claim that the method is too dangerous, as there between 30,000 to 50,000 government staff monitoring the flow of net information. (Zissis, par. 15)

The Future

With the advancements of technology, the future is promising for the correspondent, although this also means that it opens up an entirely new realm of regulations embedded by the Chinese government. The government is now taking the appropriate measures to also regulate the Internet. Dubbed “the Great Firewall”, the government has restricted the public from accessing certain websites on a global level, particularly westernized websites that, on our level, are deemed relatively harmless. TheGreatFirewall.org is a website that allows users of different countries to search personal and corporate domains to see if they have been banned in China. According to TheGreatFirewall.org, such popular websites as Facebook and YouTube that have changed the scope of virtual networking in the United States, Canada and Europe have limited access in China. Moreover, the recent Taiwanese earthquake that occurred in December 2006 severed several web interactions between those in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Mainland China, thus making it even more convoluted for users to understand exactly what content is being monitored (Williams, par. 3). This could present a problem for foreign journalists, particularly those who are used to the convenience of this interactive medium to convey their information. Correspondents now have that extra barrier to overcome, more so since other forms of

communication (i.e. fax machines) are more exposed and easier to monitor than that of electronic mail. In a report from the BBC, China is considered one of the “most active net censors”, and has created a “sanitized” version of the internet for its 130 million users daily. As a result, even popular news sites are restricted, thus forbidding users in China to view worldly broadcasted news that may or may not contradict the government-controlled material that is produced within the country. Also, on June 30 of last year, all Internet users in China were required to register with the Chinese government or otherwise face shutdown, especially in relation to blog owners. Moreover, the words “freedom” and “democracy” are now being censored off popular worldwide programs such as MSN Live Spaces (Glaser, par. 2). Reporters without Borders has reported over 62 “bloggers” (essentially, web diarists) being detained for things they have posted freely on the net, eradicating yet another freedom that North Americans have. This also eliminates the possibility – or increases the risk, at best – of having news blogs, something that the Washington Post, New York Times and other reputable news sources have maintained on their interactive sites.

Upon further study, even more disturbing information comes to light. Although Xinhua News Agency is known around the world for being the biggest propaganda tool for the Chinese government, it has made a significant mark in even Western journalism, appearing on such reputable search engines as Google News. Its influence on a global scale is evident, flourishing into an international source for news, and still providing and maintaining material for all major media outlets in China (at least 306 radio stations, 369 TV stations, 2119 newspapers and 9038 periodicals). Further, Chinese news outlets are now recruiting journalists at a young age, primarily targeting students with minimal experience – usually those who are part of the Chinese Communist Party Youth Leagues – and training them according to their own journalistic

principles. This influence may claim superiority over foreign correspondents that are trying to report news from a different scope (Battistella 2-3).

Perhaps the Chinese government simply refuses to participate in any Western technological trend without having complete control of its information flow. Reports have surfaced of a possible expansion of MySpace (another powerful and popular networking tool among North Americans) into the country, which will be appropriately dubbed as MySpace China. However, the question still remains as to who will be behind this agreement, and more importantly, how the content will be controlled.

Ambiguity also revolves around the coverage of the Beijing Olympics, slated to occur in 2008. Although construction and interactions with other countries are beginning to form, questions arise regarding the press policies that the government may have on all foreign journalists entering the country for the event. Several media reports from China Daily claim that the government will be more lenient on correspondents during the Games, and that there will be a “special policy” only applicable to the Games’ duration. However, different media reports between local news and foreign news have confused the public of how exactly Olympic coverage will be regulated. According to a report posted on the official China Embassy for the United States website, it says that reporters will be served as clients, rather than being managed (“China Gov’ts”, par. 2). A spokesperson from the official Chinese cabinet also stated that a “reporters’ assistance project” will be implemented, at least for Beijing, to aid reporters and help them produce timely and accurate news (Par. 5). Another report posted on the People’s Daily website states that Beijing “vows” to have quality media services and that no restrictions will be placed on broadcasting Olympic material, as it has been free of press restrictions in past Olympic Games (“Quality”, par. 7). While this information may be true, the South China Morning Post,

Hong Kong's premier daily newspaper, reported a points system that Beijing will also be implementing, once again putting foreign media on a tighter leash than other host countries have in the past. The system indicates that each media outlet has 12 points at the beginning of the Games, and is subject to closure if all points get deducted (Huang, par. 2). So, as much as China has tried to keep up on a global scale, it is safe to say that its elements of communist control is still evident even in the most globalized of events.

There is no definitive conclusion as to what the fate of the foreign journalist will be, especially since the relationship between China and the rest of the world is dependent on constantly changing factors (economy, globalization, etc.). One could hope that eventually China's control over foreign press will finally become par with the democratic system; however, even by analysing the cat-and-mouse affair regarding Olympic press regulations and new media restrictions, it is hard to predict a vast improvement. So long as the foreign journalist continues to utilize all resources and look for loopholes within the system to provide quality, truthful news, then it is our responsibility as the readership to seek out what is credible, and strive to become a fully informed public sphere.

Works Cited

- "About China Daily." China Daily Online. 2007. 1 Mar. 2007
<<http://pub1.chinadaily.com.cn/point/aboutcd/index1.shtml>>.
- Adam, Mohammed, and Joanne Laucius. "12 Hours of Horror: a Moment-by-Moment Account of a Day That Changed the World." The Ottawa Citizen 12 Sept. 2001, Final ed., sec. S: 9. Canadian Newsstand. ProQuest. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 21 Feb. 2007
<<http://proquest.umi.com.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/pqdweb?did=201986581&sid=6&Fmt=3&clientId=14823&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.
- Barboza, David. "Internet Boom in China is Built on Virtual Fun." The New York Times 5 Feb. 2007, sec. A: 1+.
- Battistella, Gautier. Xinhua News Agency. Reporters without Borders (Reporters sans Frontières). 11 Oct. 2006 <http://www.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/Report_Xinhua_Eng.pdf>.
- Callick, Rowan. "Confessions of a Foreign Correspondent in China." Off the Record. 4 Dec. 2006. AC Capital Strategic Public Relations. 25 Feb. 2007
<<http://accapitalpr.blog.com/1321978/>>.
- "Canada." Name List for Accredited Foreign Correspondents in China. 20 Aug. 2003. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 27 Feb. 2007
<<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/jzfw/3641/3642/t25209.htm>>.
- "Canadian Association of Journalists Statement of Principles." CAJ - Canadian Association of Journalists. 2002. Canadian Association of Journalists. 24 Feb. 2007 <"Canadian Association of Journalists Statement of Principles." CAJ - Canadian Association of Journalists. 2002. Canadian Association of Journalists. 24 Feb. 2007 .>.

- "Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms." Department of Justice Canada. Government of Canada. 30 Oct. 2006 <<http://lois.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/index.html>>.
- "CBC Wins World Online Award for SARS Coverage." CBC.Ca 17 Nov. 2003. 22 Feb. 2007 <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2003/11/17/award_win031217.html>.
- Chan, Cindy. "Canada Must Denounce China's Secrecy." The Ottawa Citizen 6 June 2003, sec. A: 15. Canadian Newsstand. ProQuest. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 20 Feb. 2007 <<http://proquest.umi.com.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/pqdweb?did=346597521&sid=6&Fmt=3&clientId=14823&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.
- Chen, Chiung Hwang. "Framing Falun Gong: Xinhua News Agency's Coverage of the New Religious Movement in China." Asian Journal of Communication 15 (2005): 16-36. Taylor and Francis Group Journals Online. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 22 Feb. 2007 <<http://journalsonline.tandf.co.uk.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/media/cmpmulmutgpd5chyyjv/w/contributions/x/f/1/c/xf1chg8uv977t0cb.pdf>>.
- "China's AIDS Scandal; Tens of Thousands of Lives Devastated. Not a Single Official Held to Account." The Hamilton Spectator 20 Jan. 2007, sec. D: 11. Canadian Newsstand. ProQuest. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 20 Feb. 2007 <<http://proquest.umi.com.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/pqdweb?did=1197616471&sid=6&Fmt=3&clientId=14823&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.
- China's Communist Revolution: a Glossary. BBC News. London. 30 Oct. 2006 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/special_report/1999/09/99/china_50/default.htm>.
- "China's SARS More Widespread Than Reported." Peace River Block Daily News 7 Apr. 2003: 12. Canadian Newsstand. ProQuest. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 20 Feb. 2007

<<http://proquest.umi.com.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/pqdweb?did=590099861&sid=6&Fmt=3&clientId=14823&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.

"China: Annual Report 2006." 2006. Reporters without Borders (Reporters sans Frontières). 30 Oct. 2006 <http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=17349&Valider=OK>.

"China: the History of ABC Foreign Reporting." ABC Around the World: on the Job with ABC Foreign Correspondents. Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). 25 Feb. 2007 <http://abc.net.au/aroundtheworld/content/temp_china.htm>.

"Chinese Media Attacks Falun Gong." BBC News 7 June 2000. 22 Feb. 2007 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/monitoring/media_reports/823620.stm>.

"Complain, Yes; Protest, No." The Globe and Mail 29 Apr. 1999, sec. A: 17. Canadian Newsstand. ProQuest. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 22 Feb. 2007 <<http://proquest.umi.com.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/pqdweb?did=1121300321&sid=2&Fmt=3&clientId=14823&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.

"Democracy in Taiwan: a Taiwanese Achievement." Taiwan Communique 71 (1996). 16 Apr. 2007 <<http://www.taiwandc.org/twcom/71-no2.htm>>.

Desmond, Robert William. The Information Process: World News Reporting to the Twentieth Century. Iowa City: University of Iowa P, 1978. 282-284.

Drache, Daniel, and Seth Feldman. Media Coverage of the 2003 Toronto SARS Outbreak. Ed. David Clifton. York University. Toronto: Robarts Centre Research Papers, 2003. 22 Feb. 2007 <http://www.yorku.ca/robarts/projects/global/papers/gcf_mediacoverageSARSto.pdf>.

Faison, Seth. Interview with Kimberly Fu. Foreign Correspondence in China: a Senior Research Project. 26 Mar. 2007. 16 Apr. 2007 <myweb.guelphhumber.ca/~kfu01/index.html>.

- "Falun Gong Cult Condemned for Hindering SARS Control." Xinhua.Net 11 June 2003. 22 Feb. 2007 <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2003-06/11/content_914561.htm>.
- "Foreword." Handbook for Foreign Correspondents in China. Aug. 2005. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 25 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/jzfw/3635/qy/t227085.htm>>.
- French, Howard W. "Citizens' Groups Take Root Across China." The New York Times 15 Feb. 2007.
- Glaser, Mark. Chinese Bloggers Run the Gauntlet of Forced Registration, Censorship. University of Southern California. Los Angeles: USC Annenberg Online Journalism Review, 2005. 28 Oct. 2006 <<http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/050621glaser/>>.
- Goodspeed, Peter. "Growing Meditation Cult Rattles Beijing: Chinese Officials Stunned as Up to 15,000 Protesting Falun Gong Followers Suddenly, Silently Appear." National Post 30 Apr. 1999, sec. A: 13. Canadian Newsstand. ProQuest. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 22 Feb. 2007.
- Hannerz, Ulf. Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents. Chicago: University of Chicago P, 2004.
- Huang, Cary. CHINA: Beijing Tightens Media Grip with Penalty Points System. South China Morning Post. Los Angeles: AsiaMedia Media News Daily, 2007. 1 Mar. 2007 <<http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/article-eastasia.asp?parentid=63416>>.
- Hutzler, Charles. "Olympics Prompt China to Relax Media Restrictions." The Vancouver Sun 2 Dec. 2006, sec. A: 16. Canadian Newsstand. ProQuest. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 20 Feb. 2007

<<http://proquest.umi.com.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/pqdweb?did=1173359551&sid=6&Fmt=3&clientId=14823&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.

"Jan Wong." Globe in Columnists. The Globe and Mail. 21 Feb. 2007

<<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinions/columnists/Jan+WongBio.html>>.

Knight, Alan. Australian Based Foreign Correspondents and Their Sources. Ejournalism.au.com.

Sydney. 16 Apr. 2007 <<http://www.ejournalism.au.com/ejournalist/correspondents.pdf>>.

Kristof, Nicholas D. "Loss May Be Higher: Troops Seal Center of a Stunned Capital - More

Wild Gunfire." The New York Times 5 June 1989, sec. A: 1+. Historical Newspapers -

The New York Times. ProQuest. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 21 Feb. 2007

<<http://proquest.umi.com.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/pqdweb?index=4&did=115593218&SrcHMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1172111963&clientId=14823>>.

Kuo-Sin, Chang. A Survey of the Chinese Language Daily Press. Hong Kong: Asian Programme

International P Institute, 1968.

Leung, Beatrice. "China and Falun Gong: Party and Society Relations in the Modern Era."

Journal of Contemporary China 11 (2002): 778-780. Taylor and Francis Journals Online.

University of Guelph, Atlanta. 22 Feb. 2007

<<http://journalsonline.tandf.co.uk.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/media/34pmulrhxrxd2rlfray/contributions/f/m/u/4/fmu4a4g92ygc9xuf.pdf>>.

Macartney, James. "China Tightens Foreign Media Restrictions." The Ottawa Citizen 11 Sept.

2006, sec. A: 5. Canadian Newsstand. ProQuest. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 20 Feb.

2007

<<http://proquest.umi.com.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/pqdweb?did=1126381281&sid=6&Fmt=3&clientId=14823&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.

Naumetz, Tim. "Not Enough Disclosed: Canada Complains About China's SARS Secrecy."

Standard - Freeholder 4 Apr. 2003: 10. Canadian Newsstand. ProQuest. University of Guelph, Atlanta. 20 Feb. 2007

<<http://proquest.umi.com.cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/pqdweb?did=323476041&sid=6&Fmt=3&clientId=14823&RQT=309&VName=PQD>>.

"Press Card and Bureau License." Handbook for Foreign Correspondents in China. 19 Dec.

2005. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 25 Feb. 2007

<<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/jzfw/3635/Part%20I/t25129.htm>>.

Press in Hong Kong Less Free Since Return to Chinese Rule - Study. The German Press Agency.

The Raw Story, 2007. 16 Apr. 2007

<http://rawstory.com/news/dpa/Press_in_Hong_Kong_less_free_since__04072007.html>.

Quality Olympic Media Services Vowed by Beijing. People's Daily Online. China Daily, 2005. 1

Mar. 2007 <http://english.people.com.cn/200509/24/eng20050924_210641.html>.

Ran, Wei. "Initial Research to the Publishing Thought of Deng Xiaoping." China Daily 26 Aug.

2004. 25 Feb. 2007 <[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-08/26/content_369140.htm)

[08/26/content_369140.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-08/26/content_369140.htm)>.

"Reporting and Interviewing: General Information." Handbook for Foreign Correspondents in

China. 20 Dec. 2005. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 25

Feb. 2007 <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/jzfw/3635/Part%20II/t25137.htm>>.

Richstad, Jim, and Michael H. Anderson, eds. Crisis in International News: Policies and

Prospects. New York City: Columbia UP, 1981.

Rudolph, Jorg-Meinhard. Crisis in International News: Policies and Prospects. Baltimore: Occasional Papers/Reprints Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, 1984.

"SARS, Iraq War: Chinese Media Spurred on Revolution." People's Daily Online 22 Aug. 2003. 22 Feb. 2007

<http://english.people.com.cn/200308/22/eng20030822_122846.shtml>.

Schechter, Danny. Falun Gong's Challenge to China: Spiritual Practice of "Evil Cult"? New York City: Akashic Books, 2001. Google Books. 22 Feb. 2007

<<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=v20J18hL1MAC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&sig=7lSg7InmAuUAQITmTPFxfkVSsJ8&dq=falun+gong%27s+challenge+to+china>>.

Steinfeld, Edward S. "Cultural Chaos: From the 'Dystopian Heyday of Maoism' to the Making of Modern China." Harvard Magazine (2007): 22-23. 16 Apr. 2007

<<http://www.harvardmagazine.com/on-line/010779.html>>.

Tai-Lin, Huang. Chen Backs Press Freedom Over Security. Taipei Times. Taipei, 2005. 16 Apr. 2007 <<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2005/07/08/2003262646>>.

"USA." Name List for Accredited Foreign Correspondents in China. 20 Aug. 2003. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 27 Feb. 2007

<<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/jzfw/3641/3642/t25175.htm>>.

Van Belle, Douglas A. Press Freedom and Global Politics. Westport: Praeger, 2000.

Williams, Chris. "Taiwan Earthquake Shakes Internet." The Register 27 Dec. 2006. 1 Mar. 2007 <http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/12/27/boxing_day_earthquake_taiwan/>.

Wong, Jan. Red China Blues: My Long March From Mao to Now. Toronto: Doubleday, 1997.

Yardley, Jim. "China Detains Noted AIDS Doctor But Shows World a Rosier Picture." The New York Times 16 Feb. 2007, sec. A: 1+.

Yardley, Jim. "China Says Rich Countries Should Take Lead on Global Warming." The New York Times 7 Feb. 2007, sec. A: 9.

York, Geoffrey. "Preserving China on His Own Dime." The Globe and Mail 08 Jan. 2007. 20 Feb. 2007

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/Page/document/v5/content/subscribe?user_URL=http://www.theglobeandmail.com%2Fservlet%2Fstory%2FLAC.20070108.ARCHITECT08%2FTPStory%2F%3Fquery%3Dpreserving%2Bchina%2Bon%2Bhis%2Bown%2Bdime&ord=3085472&brand=theglobeandmail&redirect_reason=2&denial_reasons=15661401%3A16%3B12832861%3A4%3B14446801%3A4%3B13194561%3A4%3B13822461%3A4%3B15061641%3A4%3B&force_login=false&force_ppv=true>.

Yu, Sun. "Lessons From SARS Coverage." International Journalism: Nieman Reports (2003): 91-93. 22 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/03-4NRwinter/91-93V57N4.pdf>>.

Zhang, Ernest, and Kenneth Fleming. "Examination of Characteristics of News Media Under Censorship: a Content Analysis of Selected Chinese Newspapers' SARS Coverage." Asian Journal of Communication 15 (2005). 30 Oct. 2006 <<http://journalsonline.tandf.co.uk/cerberus.lib.uoguelph.ca/media/g45cujt1g0v9t6kducy/contributions/g/3/6/3/g3631856h7775212.pdf>>.

Zhao, Yuezhi. "Falun Gong, Identity, and the Struggle Over Meaning Inside and Outside China." Contesting Media Power. 22 Feb. 2007 <http://www.sfu.ca/cmns/faculty/zhao/14_03-168_Ch13.pdf>.

Zietlin, Arnold. "SARS and the Chinese Media: a Brief Opening." The Jamestown Foundation China Brief 3 (2003). 22 Feb. 2007

<http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=19&issue_id=678&article_id=4747>.

Zissis, Carin. Media Censorship in China. Council on Foreign Relations. 2006. 16 Apr. 2007

<<http://www.cfr.org/publication/11515/>>.